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CIA Man Gave Rewald 'Covers' to Thwart IRS

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The CIA provided Ronald Rewald with three possible stories in order to skirt IRS interest in companies used as CIA covers. It was disclosed yesterday.

The disclosure came in what was the most damaging day for the government since the Rewald fraud trial began nine weeks ago.

Previously classified documents entered into evidence yesterday show that the CIA considered at least three Bishop, Baldwin, Rewald, Dillingham & Wong overseas offices as "corporate contacts" for the CIA.

Government witnesses have said the CIA only used Rewald, CMI Corp. and two other "paper" companies as cover for CIA agents abroad. The government has steered away from any implication that it was connected to Bishop, Baldwin itself.

Rewald claims that the CIA set up and ran his company. He says he had no intent to defraud investors out of millions of dollars because he thought the CIA would cover the expenses related to his extravagant lifestyle.

One document introduced into evidence yesterday shows that in January 1983, the CIA sent Rewald three suggestions on how to hide from his accountant and apparently the IRS the fact that the three companies were CIA covers. At that time the IRS was in the midst of an investigation of Rewald's finances.

The documents were admitted during the questioning of former CIA field office chief Jack Rardin, the last CIA official Rewald had contact with. Rardin was called as a defense witness after the government failed to call him during its case.

BECAUSE OF his extended contact with Rewald while head of the CIA office and because he was in charge of the office when Bishop, Baldwin collapsed,

Rardin has been considered one of the most important witnesses for Rewald.

Deputy Federal Public Defender Brian Tamanaha questioned Rardin throughout the day about his association with Rewald. He often had to jar Rardin's memory of events with classified documents.

Rardin, for instance, said he dealt with Rewald and other Bishop, Baldwin employees on a "personal basis" regarding filing of reports about their travels to the Far East. The CIA was not interested in the corporate side of Bishop, Baldwin overseas, Rardin said, although such an interest might have developed in the future.

Tamanaha, however, produced an August 1982 cable Rardin sent to CIA headquarters in Washington, D.C., listing the BBRD&W offices in Taipei, Hong Kong and Singapore as CIA "corporate contacts."

More damaging to the government was a January 1983 cable sent to Rardin from CIA headquarters discussing "cover stories" Rewald could use to avoid tax problems of three CIA "backdrops": CMI, H&H Enterprises and Canadian Far East Trading.

"A cover story based on the limited information available at (headquarters) is tentative at best," the cable warned.

THE CABLE told Rardin to discuss three possible cover stories with Rewald:

✓ That the three companies were used by "undisclosed foreign clients who needed a U.S. government base for certain unspecified business operations."

✓ That Rewald's clients passed money through Rewald's personal accounts for the establishment of companies. In other words, the money passed through Rewald's account was not his but his clients'.

✓ That Rewald did not file tax returns for companies because he did not know all of the transactions the companies were involved in.

Rewald, in fact, did tell an IRS investigator that he had not filed certain tax returns because he was waiting for direction from the CIA.

Rewald attracted CIA interest in his tax problems by telling Rardin that CIA personnel funneled money through him unknown to Rardin.

As far as Rardin knew, Rewald only received reimbursements for telephone and telex bills related to the "light cover" companies Rewald manned.

IN A CABLE to CIA headquarters in December 1982, Rardin passed on Rewald's claims that he had funneled money "to individuals in the Middle East, Argentina, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, California and Hawaii."

In the same cable, Rardin described Rewald as a "conscientious, patriotic individual who tends to quickly follow CIA instructions to the letter."

The CIA sent two officers to investigate Rewald's claims and stopped the IRS investigation for two weeks. IRS criminal investigator Joseph Camplone testified last week. The CIA then pulled back and allowed the investigation to continue.

That investigation was among several that eventually led to the collapse of BBRD&W in July 1983.

Rewald faces 98 counts of fraud, tax evasion and perjury.